

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 08043 171900Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /053 W

----- 053136

R 171810Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7685

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8043

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, IT

SUBJ: MEDIA COVERAGE OF CARTER RAI-TV INTERVIEW ON ITALY

1. NEWS AGENCY SUMMARY OF JIMMY CARTER'S INTERVIEW WITH RAI
US CORRESPONDENT JAS GAWRONSKI GIVEN WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE.
LA STAMPS, IL GIORNO, LA REPUBBLICA, PAESE SERA AND L'UNITA'
ALL CARRIED NEWS AGENCY STORY FOCUSSED ON STATEMENTS THAT IF
CARTER BECOMES PRESIDENT HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO CONTACTS
WITH PCI; THAT HE BELIEVES THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT SEIZE
TOTAL POWER BUT WILL PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THEY
WOULD TRY TO CONVINCE THE WORLD THAT THEY ARE INDEPENDENT
OF MOSCOW. ALSO FEATURED WAS STATEMENT THAT AMERICAN SHOULD
NOT TELL THE ITALIANS HOW TO VOTE. PAESE SERA CARRIED STORY
IN LARGE FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE WITH PICTURE, L'UNITA' AND LA
REPUBBLICA IN SMALLER FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE. OTHERS CARRIED IN
INTERIOR PAGES. DC ORGAN IL POPOLO OBSERVED THAT INTERVIEW
"WAS HAPPILY PLAYED BY THE COMMUNIST PAPERS AS A KIND OF
ASSENT, AS A RESIGNED AND TRUSTFUL WILLINGNESS (ON SUBJECT OF)
EUROCOMMUNISM... HOWEVER JIMMY CARTER WISELY REFRAINS FROM
GIVING US TOO MUCH ADVICE... THE PCI IS IMPATIENTLY
SEARCHING THROUGH THE MIST OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN
FOR SMOKE SIGNALS INDICATING WESTERN LEGITIMACY... WE BELIEVE
WE CAN ASSURE MR. CARTER THAT THE PCI WILL NOT SUCCEED IN
OBTAINING FULL POWER IN ITALY, AND THAT THERE WILL ALSO BE
SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PCI PARTICIPATION
IN POWER..."

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COMMENT: FACT THAT COMMUNIST PRESS GAVE INTERVIEW PROMINENT TREATMENT AND SEVERAL PAPERS IGNORED IT IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF STRONGLY POLITICIZED MEDIA. PCI OBVIOUSLY SEIZING ON ANYTHING THEY CAN USE TO DEMONSTRATE LEGITIMACY, AND ONE OF CURRENT THEMES IS THAT US OPPOSITION TO PCI ENTERING ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL DISSIPATE IN EVENT OF PROBABLE VICTORY OF DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. AS PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED, ANYTHING DEPARTMENT CAN DO TO ALTER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR ADVISERS TO PROBLEMS CAUSED BY PCI'S PARTISAN USE OF AMBIGUOUS STATEMENTS WOULD BE IN OVERALL US INTEREST. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME08043
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760191-0176
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760546/aaaabnbb.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA COVERAGE OF CARTER RAI-TV INTERVIEW ON ITALY
TAGS: SOPN, IT, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006